

TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS: OUR MINISTRY AND WITNESS

WILLIAM D. WATLEY

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ST. JAMES AME CHURCH

**588 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Newark, New Jersey 07102**

TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS: OUR MINISTRY AND WITNESS

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age.

'St. Matthew 28:16-19

THE CHURCH'S KERYGMATIC MISSION

These words from St. Matthew's gospel constitute the famous "Great Commission" given by Jesus to the disciples as he prepared to return to his Father and their Father, his God and their God. Throughout the pages the Great Commission has been the evangelistic mandate which has defined the church's *kerygmatic* (proclamation, message) role and undergirded much of its missionary outreach. Christianity does not come to humankind with only acts of "loving-kindness and tender mercies." Otherwise it would simply be a social service or a philanthropic enterprise. Neither does Christianity come as just another participant in the class struggle, siding with either the oppressed against the oppressor or vice-versa. If such were the case, Christianity would only be another political ideology. Christianity comes to humanity with a radical new message about the redeemed relationship of God with the world. The message essentially is that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (St. John 3:16-17).

The implications of this message of divine love and salvation are not only vertical but horizontal, and define not only the relationship between human beings and God but our relationship with each other as well. Our salvation from God and reconciliation with God mandate our reconciliation with each other. St. Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount records Jesus as saying, "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (St. Matthew 5:23-24). In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus told his disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (St. John 13:34-35). In the epistle known as I John we are told, "If any one says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also." (I John 4:20)

This is the *kerygma*; this is the proclamation; this is the message that the church brings to the nations and peoples of the earth. It is a message that defines the divine-human relationship as well as human relationships in terms of love. Our relationship with God is not solely defined by legalistic codes of righteousness and by divine judgment but also by love, mercy and forgiveness. Our relationships with each other are not ultimately defined by power and politics, but love and justice as well. For justice is inherent in love. We express love by doing right to and

doing right by people. This is the message, the proclamation through which we make disciples of all nations.

THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY OF SERVICE

The church has always understood that it must do more than simply proclaim the message to make disciples of all nations. Jesus did more than announce that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand; he demonstrated the reality of the Kingdom as he liberated and served the broken and bruised humanity in his midst. From the beginning the message was linked to a ministry of liberation.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

Jesus' ministry was one of service — he fed the hungry, healed the sick, and comforted the distressed. He requires the same ministry of service and care from those who follow him as disciples. This point is illustrated in the classic parable found in St. Matthew 25:31-45. Persons who speak despairingly of the church's involvement in politics or of the "Social Gospel" must remember that the gospel has social as well as personal implications. Liberation was central to the ministry of Jesus and as it must be to our ministry and witness. We must not ever forget that service to others is part of the *kerygma* and inherent to the process by which we make disciples of all nations. We have a *diakonic* (service) as well as *kerygmatic* mission.

THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY OF WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP

We make disciples of all nations by "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Baptism is an act of worship which unites and incorporates one into the body of Christ, the church. It is an act of public confession that one accepts Jesus Christ as the Lord of one's life. It is a liturgical act, a rite of passage, a ceremony of initiation, a statement of affirmation, which celebrates as well as confirms the washing away of iniquity and the cleansing into wholeness. Our worship and liturgical life as the people of God is in-

dispensable to the disciplining of all nations. The church lives and serves as much in its worship as by its message, acts of liberation and ministry of care.

We are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the fellowship of the faithful. The New Testament term for fellowship is *koinonia*. The church essentially is a fellowship of kindred spirits united around belief in a common Lord being committed to the common cause of the Kingdom of God and held together by a common Spirit. We are the *koinonia* which lives to expound the *kerygma*, whose witness is characterized by *diakonia*, and which meets often in worship for inspiration and celebration of the faith in which we have been saved and the mission to which we are called. It is only when the church functions as a genuine fellowship of the redeemed that it can proclaim with power, serve with effectiveness, and worship in spirit and in truth. To make disciples of all nations is to bind the peoples of the world into a fellowship that is greater than geographic boundaries, or ideological, racial, and cultural distinctions, and political differences.

THE CHURCH'S EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY

"... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. . ." We make disciples of all nations as we teach; as we educate. Not only must we proclaim, serve, and worship — we are called to teach. Since its inception the church has understood that a teaching ministry is inherent to its evangelical thrust, integrated to its ministry of service, and an essential ingredient of worship and fellowship. The message must not only be proclaimed, it must be taught. Sinners must not only be converted saints, they must also be strengthened. The New Testament term for this aspect of the church's life was *didache*. Those who engage in the church's educational or teaching ministry have always ranked high in the eyes and life of the church. In I Corinthians 12:28 Paul wrote: "And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues." In Paul's ranking, teachers, those involved in the church's educational ministry, are ranked third. They come directly after apostles and prophets. *Didache* or teaching in the life of the church is not only a ministry, it is also a witness. It is one of the ways that we extend the Kingdom of God. It is part of the mechanism for making disciples of all nations.

THE MINISTRY AND WITNESS OF ST. JAMES AME CHURCH

As a member of the church catholic (universal), St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church has always labored to be faithful to the Great Commission in all of its aspects. Since our organization, circa 1842, we have labored to proclaim, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." We have served our communi-

ty, "our calling to fulfill." The black church historically has functioned as the major community of fellowship for black people. St. James has embodied this characteristic of church life which extends back to the New Testament era and has found unique expression among black Americans. We have always taken our educational ministry and witness seriously.

While all true churches of Christ attempt to live out the full implications of the Great Commission, it is also true that each local church develops its own personality, mission statement, and congregational witness within the perimeters of the Great Commission. The mission of the church in one place as it tries to fulfill the Great Commission may be different from the emphasis of another church in another place. Each church must serve God with the resources at hand, as best it can, in the community where it is located.

In the New Testament all churches were working toward the same goal but each church developed its own personality and was faced with its own individual challenges. When the risen Christ sent messages to the seven churches of Asia in the Book of Revelation, each congregation faced with its own problems, shortcomings and triumphs, received its own individual message. The Church at Ephesus had a different personality, and faced a different set of problems and challenges in Ephesus, than did the church at Laodicea. Paul in his letters addressed one set of issues when he wrote to the church at Corinth, another to the church at Galatia, and another to the church at Philippi. The church at Jerusalem had a different personality and a different set of problems from the church of Rome. Each congregation had its own strengths and weaknesses.

In other words, each of us must serve God where we have been placed, and much of our witness and ministry are shaped by the problems we face in the community where God has situated us as we try to live out the implications of the Great Commission. As each congregation in the Book of Revelations received its own message and mandate from the risen Christ, we at St. James must also ask, "Lord what will thou have us to do?"

What is the message for us here in Newark? What will be the distinction of our witness as a church which stands like "a city set on a hill which cannot be hid?"

St. James, as a church, is blessed with a number of resources — spiritual, human, financial, etc. Our community as we all know, like all other communities, has a number of problems — inadequate housing, high unemployment, rising drug addiction, crime and difficulties in our educational system. We cannot solve all of the problems in our community, but we can make a strong mission statement in certain places, as we live in faithfulness to the Great Commission. After much prayer and

being guided by the Holy Spirit, I propose that the personality of St. James and the rich resources we have in terms of talent, make us uniquely qualified to exercise an exceptionally strong educational or teaching ministry. A strong mission emphasis in education does not mean that we will neglect our ministries of proclamation, service, worship and fellowship. Our educational witness and ministry however will receive special emphasis among the others. We will make our unique mission statement around education.

When we speak about an educational witness we are not only referring to education in the faith but education for life. We not only want to prepare our souls for heaven, we also want to prepare our minds and bodies for life on this earth. Therefore, we are proposing that St. James AME Church in the city of Newark, as it attempts to live out the full implications of the Great Commission, and serve faithfully the community where it exists, build and operate

a multi-purpose community and administrative facility which will house a co-educational secondary preparatory school, as well as other social programs.

ST. JAMES AME CHURCH PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Philosophy and Purpose

The St. James AME Church Preparatory School will be an educational pioneer in the State of New Jersey committed to a quality education shaped by the Black Protestant religious tradition. The school will be unique in that it will be the only secondary school in the United States sponsored by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest Black Christian denomination in America.

The St. James AME Church High School, as a private four year college preparatory institution, will serve students in Newark and the surrounding communities. We



**PROPOSED MULTIPURPOSE OUTREACH
AND ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITY
ST. JAMES A.M.E. CHURCH**

believe that learning is a life-long process. Therefore, secondary education should prepare the student for higher education, whether technical or four year liberal arts. We will endeavor to provide the finest academic education possible. We will strive, along with this, to acquaint every child with the importance of religion, specifically the Christian faith, as an ingredient of life.

Role of Parents

The school will operate on the premise that the Word of God requires that the parents be responsible for the total education of their children in school, as well as the home and church. The church, the school and the home must work together to provide preparation for life. The school proposes to work in harmony with the home.

To ensure that parents understand and support the basic mission of the school, they will be involved on many levels. They will be made to feel the importance of their role in achieving this mission.

CURRICULUM

All students will be required to take a core of required courses which will meet college acceptance requirements. Required courses will be offered every year. Because of scheduling, not all elective courses will be offered every year, but rather on a rotating basis.

While it is hoped that the school will be interracial, intercultural and interdenominational, it is also hoped that we will affirm our ethnicity where possible, such as in literature and the arts. While we may not specialize in compensatory education, our school will be sensitive to maximizing the potential of the average as well as the gifted student. Our school will also be creative in exploring curriculum possibilities, areas of specialization, such as business other programs, methods of instruction, etc. which will add to our uniqueness as an educational institution.



Other Aspects of the New Facility

The high school will only constitute one aspect of this facility. There will also be a mission outreach facility which will house our clothing distribution program, food pantry and other possible social programs such as senior citizen day care and a "Latch-Key" program.

The credit union, associate pastors' offices, pastor's office and reception area will be relocated in the new facility. A choir room, bookstore and computer/equipment room will also be added to the administrative area of the building.

Other physical changes will include the following:

- a) The men's room, now found in the basement, will be where the Credit Union is currently located.
- b) The tape ministry recording room and office, now located in the balcony of the Sunday School, will be in the current secretary's office.
- c) The nurse's room, now found in our basement, will be in the current pastor's office.
- d) The current Sunday school room will be transformed into a chapel for some small functions, so that the large sanctuary would not have to be heated or cooled for some of our small gatherings, i.e., love feast.
- e) A Sacristy, where communion will be prepared, will be added under the pulpit in part of the area now used for storage. This will eliminate not only an inconvenient, but a potentially hazardous preparation area, presently used by our stewardesses.

Time Table and Cost of Construction

Our goal is to begin construction in the fall of 1988. We plan to open the school with Grades 9 and 10 in the fall of 1990 or sooner. Grade 11 would be added in 1991 and grade 12 in 1992. It is hoped that all components of the building will be operational by 1993. Presently, we estimate construction costs, including excavation and renovation, to be 5.2 to 5.5 million dollars.

FINANCING

The Church will finance the cost of construction by using one or both of the following methods:

1. Bond Financing

This type of financing will allow broad based participation in the financing of our project through the purchasing of bonds. A professional financial organization will prepare a bond offering and the proceeds will be used to finance construction.

Individuals who purchase bonds will receive tax free income. This type of financing is generally secured at low interest rates.

2. Conventional Mortgage Financing

This type of financing is similar to the typical conventional home mortgage. The loan is secured from a bank or other lending institution usually at prevailing interest rates.

In addition to the above methods, we plan to approach the corporate community for gifts, grants, donations, matching funds, etc. State and Federal agencies will also be contacted as a possible funding source.

We will explore all of these methods and will come up with a plan that is best for our church.

FUND-RAISING

With Almighty God as our guide, an Every Member Visitation Committee has been prayerfully created to provide leadership to our fund raising effort within the church membership. Our role is to encourage, educate and implement a donation plan that will make it possible for all of us to give generously and as God has blessed us to this effort. We believe that we can unite ourselves and make this educational vision a reality here in this place and at this time.

Therefore, in the spirit of the Great Commission and in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we ask you — every member of St. James, young and old alike, dedicate yourselves to doing all that you can to help your church family raise two million (\$2,000,000.) over the next 20 months.

We must lead the way in giving so that together we can build an appropriate multipurpose facility to house the St. James High School as well as our other community outreach programs. To that end, we are asking every member and friend of St. James to participate in our "DONATE-A-BRICK" Campaign. Church and community organizations, fraternal groups, social clubs, and other interested persons or groups may also purchase bricks. Our goal is for the church membership and friends to donate 4,000 bricks. The donation is \$500 per brick. Each person who donates one or more bricks will have their name or the name of anyone else they choose engraved on a specially designed plaque in the Saint James AME Church High School.

We have included in this publication a Donate-A-Brick Campaign Pledge Form and an Easy Donation Schedule to assist you in your planning and giving. There are two important dimensions to this campaign: First, we are asking you to pledge yourselves spiritually and secondly, to pledge yourselves financially.

To pledge yourself spiritually, we are asking you to pledge to pray at a certain time everyday for the spiritual and financial success of this campaign. Secondly, if possible, we are asking you to pledge to fast one day a week for the spiritual and financial success of this campaign, until this project has been completed.

To pledge yourself financially, we are asking that you pledge to donate as many bricks as possible, in accordance with your blessings. We are asking that you pledge as soon as possible.

Once you have completed your pledge form, please give it to any member of the Every Member Visitation Committee or Pledge Committee, turn it into the church office.

For those who are interested in obtaining further information about this project or the Donate-A-Brick Campaign we will conduct a series of teach-ins here in the church at designated times. If you would rather have a personal visit at your home, you may also notify the Every Member Visitation Committee and they will visit your home.

For us to succeed in this vision, we will need the full support of every member of the St. James AME Church Family.

Organization

In addition to the financial support of our members, we will need assistance in planning the various phases of this multifaceted endeavor. Much work remains to be done before this vision becomes a reality. We are grateful to the members of the planning committee who have worked to bring us this far in our planning. However, a project of this magnitude requires the involvement of as many of our members as possible, with their talents and expertise. We will have a number of committees which will work on the various problematic aspects of this project and a variety of skills, hands, talents and heads will be needed.

Our organization will be as follows:

William D. Watley, Chairperson
Madison Flannigan, Vice Chairperson
Lewis Turner, Secretary
John Woods, James Brown, Treasurers

COMMITTEES

Coordinating Committee - This committee will consist of the above named persons, the chairpersons and vice chairpersons of the other committee, and several members at large. This committee will serve as the executive board of the project. It will coordinate the work of the other committees and serve a clearing house function. It will supervise the disbursement of any funds and answer any questions that the various committees may have. It will meet at least once per month or as the need arises.

Pledge Committee

This committee will receive the payments on pledges, second the same and issue receipts. A separate account will be established for this project and all monies collected for this venture will be deposited in this account. This committee will have the responsibility of keeping an accurate account of all monies received through individual pledges.

Every Member Visitation Committee

This committee will organize our campaign to acquaint every member of our church with this project. Members who need further explanation may contact this committee and a visit will be arranged at home or a teach-in will be scheduled at church.

Development Committee

This committee will write proposals to secure monies from private foundations and federal funding. It will also engage in corporate fund-raising. It will do whatever research is necessary for proposal development.

Educational Strategies

This committee will work out all problems related to this high school, such as establishing policies, budget, formulation or governing boards, etc.

Support Services

This committee will provide secretarial assistance, prepare mailings, help when possible, serve for special functions, etc.

Clothing Distribution

This committee will plan and coordinate the clothing distribution program in the new facility.

Food Pantry

This committee will organize the food pantry and distribution program in the new facility.

Health Spa

This committee will make suggestions regarding equipment and operation of the health spa as a financially profitable venture.

We are asking for volunteers to work on these various committees. Thus everyone who desires can have some input into the various phases of this project.

A form is enclosed for you to state your committee preference.

ST. JAMES AME CHURCH PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Suggested Programs for Grades 9 Thru 12 Pupils Interested in Higher Education

Grade 9

English I
Algebra I
Foreign Language I
Science
U.S. History I
Physical Education/Health
World Religions

Grade 10

English II
Geometry
Foreign Language II
Science
U.S. History II
Physical Education/Health
History of Christianity

Grade 11

English III
World History I
Foreign Language III
Algebra II
Science
Elective
Physical Education/Health

Grade 12

English IV
Social Studies Elective
Foreign Language IV
Science
Mathematics
Elective
Physical Education/Health

Note: Five subjects each semester plus Physical Education and Health are recommended for all students.

Pupils Interested in Business

Grade 9

English I
Business Math
Exploratory Business/US History
Typing I
Science
Reading/Careers
World Religions
Physical Education/Health

Grade 10

English II
Accounting I
Typing I & II
Steno I
U.S. History I
History of Christianity
Physical Education/Health

Grade 11

English III
Business English
U.S. History II
Accounting
Office Practice/Procedures/
Steno II
Physical Education/Health
Elective or Foreign
Language**

Grade 12

English IV
Social Studies Elective
Office Practice/Procedures
Cooperative Office Education
Elective or Foreign
Language**
Elective
Physical Education/Health

Note: Five Subjects each semester plus Physical Education and Health are recommended for all students.

****Bilingual Secretary**

CONCLUSION

Such a venture as this is bold to be sure. Some might even say that this venture is too big, or bold or hard. However, nothing is too big, or bold, or hard for the God whose we are and whom we serve. It is as bold as the commission of Christ given to eleven men and a few bewildered followers to "go and make disciples of all nations." However, Jesus left his promise with them as they prepared to obey his commission: "Lo I am with you always, to the close of the age." As we engage this venture of faith as a way of living out the full implications of the Great Commission, let us never forget that we are not alone. The same Christ who saved us, called us and sent us, goes with us. He goes with us to strengthen and comfort us, and goes before us to make ways for us. He is with us as we proclaim the word and serve his children, our sisters and brothers. He is with us in worship and fellowship; he is with us in the classroom.

He is with us today, tomorrow and even to the close of the age. Our leadership, both clergy and lay, may change but "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." He will be with us until nations beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks, and study war no more. He will be with us until the Kingdom of the world becomes the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. He will be with us until "justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream," right here in New-ark. He will be with us, until the church militant becomes the church triumphant.

As we engage this bold education venture in our attempt to be faithful to the Great Commission, let us hear again the voice of our Lord speaking to us from across the ages:

*While thus ye follow my commands,
I'm with you till the world shall end,
All power is trusted in my hands,
I can destroy, and can defend.*

ST. JAMES AME CHURCH
588 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Rev. Dr. William D. Watley

201-622-1344